



un film documentario di
Francesca Giunta

Ritratto di Famiglia

Con Elisa Giunta e Giovanni Giunta

E la partecipazione speciale di
Giuseppe Enrico Giunta e Simona Spampinato

Title:

Ritratto di Famiglia (family portrait)

Logline

A family journey in search of the origins of the need for artistic expression.

Short Synopsis

It's the Nineties, and three little siblings, Elisa, Francesca and Giovanni, grow up in a small Sicilian town being constantly surrounded by music.

Francesca feels somewhat different from the rest of her family. She soon discovers her love for visual art and later in life she decides to become first painter and then, being unsatisfied, a film-maker.

Going back to the past, Giovanni struggles with having to be compared with his sisters who constantly bring home better school results than he does. He has different priorities in life, he wants to play drums and explore the world of sound. He will later choose a profession in which he could be the best and that will make him powerful if not indispensable.

With another plunge into the past, we discover Elisa's world, made by a lot of talent but no friends with whom to spend time and play. The desire to escape this reality and her will for redemption make her fall in love with the world of musicals and she dedicates her life to becoming a performer and director. As the three look back to their past, they discover to have a lot in common in the drive that makes them the different artists they are.

Long synopsis

Ritratto di famiglia is an auto-biographical documentary of medium length (± 25 minutes), based on three main characters: Francesca, Elisa and Giovanni, three siblings on the threshold of their thirties, who have chosen to pursue artistic careers albeit in different fields.

The film opens on the family life of the three protagonists, still children, growing up in Sicily in the '90s, constantly immersed in an environment dominated by music. The father of the three is in fact a composer, pianist and orchestra director, while their mother is a former dancer and flutist. Although music lover, Francesca feels somewhat different from the rest of her family, preferring activities that are less lively and more contemplative than her two brothers. In fact, she soon discovered her love for visual art, and, having graduated from high school, she decided to enroll in the Academy of Fine Arts to become a painter. Over the years, however, he realizes that the two-dimensional surface of a canvas is not enough for him to express herself, and changes her course of study and life, becoming a film-maker, combining the purely visual aspect of the images, with the music-like and time-based component of editing and sound design.

Going back to the past, the attention is now focused on Giovanni and his difficulties in his growing process, and on how these have then influenced his adult life as well as the choice of his career and his artistic approach, first as a drummer and subsequently as technical director. Even Giovanni, who has always favored the sonorous and musical aspects of art, discovers in his adulthood a propensity towards more visual aspects of his profession (light design and theater), thus bringing him closer to the artistic ambitions of his sisters.

With a further plunge into the past, the focus shifts on Elisa. As a child, she too suffers from feeling different and isolated. Without friends with whom to spend recreation and play, Elisa discovers that singing and running help her escape from her lonely condition. The desire to escape and redemption make her fall in love with the world of musicals and, leaving behind her university studies, she dedicates her life to becoming a performer and director of musicals, moving away from her career as a pianist who forced her to a continuous confrontation with her father.

The film concludes with an overview of the recurring themes and the affinities of approaches of the three siblings in the current artistic professions and an evaluation of how their growing together has conditioned their being artists even in different fields.

Genre and Style

Documentary/film essay

This film is going to have the share of a collage film. It will be realized by juxtaposing different piece of footage and other audio-visual items collected during the pre-production phase. The aim is to reach a nostalgic and homey feeling by using this “rough around the edge” technique.

Target audience:

The film aims at an audience of independent/underground cinema enthusiasts and teenagers / young people who want to pursue an artistic career.

Director's statement:

Francesca Giunta is an Italian artist currently based in the Netherlands.

After graduating in 2015 as a painter, at the Fine Arts Academy of Catania in Italy, she decided to expand her life experiences and skill-set by moving abroad and going back to studying: she is currently a third year audiovisual-design student at Willem de Kooning Academy, Rotterdam.

As a designer, she brings her previous studies into her practice, merging and shaking the boundaries of different disciplines. Though her work is very concept-driven, content and form are equally important in her designs, as she believes that one should be mirror to the other. This makes her production very diverse in terms of style, though her artistic signature is visible in her production: mixing analogue and digital as much as possible.

The recurrent theme in her production is the need of knowing oneself to understand the world, in an everlasting philosophical research and one of her biggest inspiration is the work of Michel Gondry, such as *La Science des rêves*, or the music video for *Crystalline* by Björk.

Francesca is currently working on the short documentary/film essay *Ritratto di famiglia* about her relationship with her siblings and their differences in drive as artists.

Structure:

The struttura of Family Portrait is inn three acts.

First act: ME (7/8 minuti)

Scene 1.1 - Family:

Brief overview of the family, mom dad and three children, and the cultural conditions in which the three siblings grew up.



Scene 1.2 - Mystical contemplation:

Attention shifts to the author of the film, Francesca, and on how growing up she felt different from her siblings, in tastes and propensities.



Scene 1.3 - Own it

During her adolescence, Francesca learns to appreciate being "different" from her family and makes it her point of strength. Entering adult life, however, he realizes that she tends to make choices that are surprisingly close to those of the rest of the family.



Second Act: Them (circa 15 minutes)

Scene 2.1 - Down with the school

We return to the past, but the attention is turned towards Giovanni and his difficulties in growing up with two sisters who brought home better school results than he and the consequences of his school conduct.



Scene 2.2 - Delirium of omnipotence

As a result of his traumas of the past, Giovanni decides to pursue an artistic / musical career that guarantees his being powerful if not indispensable in collective productions (he graduates in jazz drums, plays bass in orchestra and acts as technical director at the theatre).



Scene 2.3 - Light design

Despite his musical training, in recent years Giovanni has devoted himself more to directing lights in theatrical performances, discovering a new means of purely visual expression to which he can combine his performative skills as a phonic and instrumentalist.



Scene 2.4 - Mulan

We return to the past once again. This time the focus is on Elisa as a child and her feeling isolated and "wrong" compared to her peers because of her size. The only way to escape from her loneliness during recess is to sing the song from the Disney movie *Mulan*, *Reflection* and run around the schoolyard.



Scene 2.5 - The therapeutic power of theater.

Thanks to that episode of her childhood, Elisa understands that the only way to accept herself as she is and redeem herself is to pursue a career in the world of musical theater as a performer. Also as a director, the choice of themes addressed in his productions are always related to personal or social redemption.



Scene 2.6 - Performance anxiety

The choice to become a performer (singer, actress and dancer) rather than continuing an "easier" career as a pianist (Elisa graduates in classical piano at the conservatory) also derives from the awareness of wanting to distance herself from the continuous confrontation with her father (also a pianist) which gave her performance anxieties and aggravated her psychological condition rather than alleviating it.



Third Act: We (7/8 minutes)

Scene 3.1: spotlights

In what the three siblings make is often present a narcissistic component and the idea that they can do things better than others always plays an important role. This narcissism in the working field hides their insecurities in everyday life.

3.2: Differentiation

Another aspect that unites the three sibling's approach is their common will for wanting to differentiate themselves from each others. With choosing different fields they want to make a statement about their uniqueness and independent from one another, while at the same time, being still somewhat close paths.

3.3 Education

Finally, the three siblings all have in common their will to teach though their art their idea of beauty to others, with the purpose of making the world a better place.



Characters

Francesca:

She is one of “the twins”. As a kid she seems the most peculiar of the three siblings, being very shy and preferring to observe things rather than actively take part of her family activities, which will get her the nickname of “the stone” . Growing up, this peculiarity turns into visual artistic ambitions and she pursue the career first as a visual artist (painter/film maker)

Giovanni:

as a child he is called “the earthquake” for how lively and active! He often gets hurt for his recklessness and bravery. Being very brilliant and smart he is expected to bring home good school results, especially since he is so much alike his father, but he doesn’t really like school and growing up he feels very judged from the whole family for this. As an adult he becomes first a multi-instrumentalist and then a sound and light technician. Being so good at his job finally proves that school wasn’t so important after all and it makes him finally feel powerful and indispensable.

Elisa:

She is the firstborn. From an early age she shows how talented and gifted she is in everything she does. She is constantly put on a pedestal by the whole family for all of her abilities, which enhance her talents and make her believe she is on top of the world. But all this falls apart when she starts gaining weight and being ridiculed by her classmates at school for being the teachers pet. As a teenager she finds herself being the best in her class and an outstanding pianist but with no friends. Becoming a performer, she finds her redemption, her way back to the “invincible” Elisa she was as a kid because, no matter what she looks like she can feel beautiful on a musical stage.

Dad and Mum:

They are the narrator of the three stories. They go back to the past to look at each of their children in light of what they have becoming now. In this emotional journey, they interrogate themselves about what role have they played in forming the three siblings as artists, wondering if they were able to support them so far or if some possible mistake affected the way they are now. They evaluate with a renewed awareness, how much did they in fact understood of their children’s personalities and ambitions during their childhood.

